

CHAPTER 7—DESIGN OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

BLUEPRINT

The social studies framework was based on Maine’s *Learning Results*, which identifies a total of thirteen **content standards** in the four disciplines—civics and government; history; geography; and economics—as listed below:

CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT

- **Rights, responsibilities, and participation:** Students understand the rights and responsibilities of civic life and employ the skills of effective civic participation.
- **Purpose and types of government:** Students understand the types and purposes of governments, their evolution, and their relationships with the governed.
- **Fundamental principles of government and constitutions:** Students understand the constitutional principles and the democratic foundations of the political institutions of the United States.
- **International relations:** Students understand the political relationships among the United States and other nations.

HISTORY

- **Chronology:** Students use the chronology of history and major eras to demonstrate the relationships of events and people.
- **Historical knowledge, concepts, and patterns:** Students develop historical knowledge of major events, people, and enduring themes in the United States, in Maine, and throughout world history.
- **Historical inquiry, analysis, and interpretation:** Students learn to evaluate resource material such as documents, artifacts, maps, artwork, and literature, and to make judgments about the perspectives of the authors and their credibility when interpreting current historical events.

GEOGRAPHY

- **Skills and tools:** Students know how to construct and interpret maps and use globes and other geographic tools to locate and derive information about people, places, regions, and environments.

- **Human interaction with environments:** Students understand and analyze the relationships among people and their physical environments.

ECONOMICS

- **Personal and consumer economics:** Students understand that economic decisions are based on the availability of resources and the costs and benefits of choices.
- **Economic systems of the United States:** Students understand the economic system of the United States, including its principles, development, and institutions.
- **Comparative systems:** Students analyze how different economic systems function and change over time.
- **International trade and global interdependence:** Students understand the patterns and results of international trade.

These thirteen standards have been used to create the reporting category framework for social studies, shown below.

Social Studies Framework		
Standard	Percentage of Questions Emphasizing Content	Percentage of Questions Emphasizing Application
Civics and Government:		
A. Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation	50%	50%
B./C. Purposes, Types, and Fundamental Principles	60%	40%
D. International Relations	60%	40%
History:		
A./B. Chronology and Historical Knowledge, Concepts, and Patterns	60%	40%
C. Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation	40%	60%
Geography:		
A. Skills and Tools	40%	60%
B. Human Interaction with Environments	60%	40%
Economics:		
A. Personal and Consumer Economics	50%	50%
B./C. Economic Systems	50%	50%
D. International Trade and Global Interdependence (Grades 8 and 11)	60%	40%

Social studies education stresses a strong commitment to content knowledge, emphasizes the student’s ability to engage in complex thinking and reasoning skills, and emphasizes the clear communication of ideas. Social studies assessment focuses on both content and applications to evaluate what students know and can demonstrate.

CONTENT SPECS

The MEA social studies assessment included multiple-choice, short-answer, constructed-response, and extended-response questions. Short-answer questions, which were new in the revised MEA, required students to answer questions using one or two words or a short phrase. Extended-response questions in social studies are similar to constructed-response questions except that they are more complex, requiring 10-20 minutes of response time. Each type of question was worth a specific number of points in the student’s total social studies score, as shown below.

Type of Question	Possible Score Points
Multiple Choice	0–1
Short Answer	0–2
Constructed Response	0–4
Extended Response	0–8

TEST DESIGN

The tables below summarize the numbers and types of common, matrix-sampled, and pre-test questions that were used in the social studies assessment.

Grade 4									
Common					Matrix/Pre-test				
Session	MC	SA	CR	ER	MC	SA	CR	ER	Time (minutes)
1	3	0	2	–	2	0	0	–	25
2	3	0	1	–	2	0	1	–	25
3	3	0	1	–	2	1	1	–	27
4	6	3	1	–	2	1	0	–	26
Total	15	3	5	–	8	2	2	–	

Grades 8 and 11									
Common					Matrix/Pre-test				
Session	MC	SA	CR	ER	MC	SA	CR	ER	Time (minutes)
1	5	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	41
2	5	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	41
3	5	1	2	0	4	0	1	0	41
Total	15	3	3	1	8	2	2	1	

Key

- MC = multiple-choice questions
- SA = short-answer questions
- CR = constructed-response questions
- ER = extended-response questions

The charts on the following pages outline the total number of possible points—as reported—by learning results and item type.

SOCIAL STUDIES
Number of Points Possible
Grade 4

Standard	Common					Matrix					Total Possible Points
	MC	SA	CR	Points	Percent	MC	SA	CR	Points	Percent	
Content	12	2	4	18	13	108	6	4	118	87	136
Application	3	2	16	21	19	12	20	60	92	81	113
Civics and Government (Standards A and B)	4	2	8	14	22	27	8	16	51	78	65
Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation (Standard A)	3	0	8	11	26	18	6	8	32	74	43
Purpose, Types, and Fundamental Principles of Government (Standard B)	1	2	0	3	14	9	2	8	19	86	22
History (Standards A, B, and C)	4	2	4	10	15	33	8	16	57	85	67
Chronology, Historical Knowledge, Concepts, and Patterns (Standards A and B)	3	2	0	5	13	23	2	8	33	87	38
Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation (Standard C)	1	0	4	5	17	10	6	8	24	83	29
Geography (Standards A and B)	4	0	4	8	14	28	10	12	50	86	58
Skills and Tools (Standard A)	2	0	0	2	13	14	0	0	14	87	16
Human Interaction with Environments (Standard B)	2	0	4	6	14	14	10	12	36	86	42
Economics (Standards A and B)	3	0	4	7	15	20	0	20	40	85	47
Personal and Consumer Economics/ Economic Systems (Standards A and B)	3	0	4	7	15	20	0	20	40	85	47

SOCIAL STUDIES
Number of Points Possible
Grade 8

Standard	Common						Matrix						Total Possible Points
	MC	SA	CR	ER	Points	Percent	MC	SA	CR	ER	Points	Percent	
Content	13	6	0	8	27	14	125	26	0	12	163	86	190
Application	2	0	12	0	14	8	0	38	0	116	154	92	168
Civics and Government (Standards A, B, C, and D)	4	2	4	0	10	10	32	28	0	32	92	90	102
Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation (Standard A)	2	0	4	0	6	19	11	6	0	8	25	81	31
Purpose, Types, and Fundamental Principles of Government (Standards B and C)	2	0	0	0	2	4	16	14	0	16	46	96	48
International Relations (Standard D)	0	2	0	0	2	9	5	8	0	8	21	91	23
History (Standards A, B, and C)	4	0	0	8	12	11	37	22	0	40	99	89	111
Chronology, Historical Knowledge, Concepts, and Patterns (Standards A and B)	4	0	0	0	4	5	35	16	0	24	75	95	79
Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation (Standard C)	0	0	0	8	8	25	2	6	0	16	24	75	32
Geography (Standards A and B)	4	2	4	0	10	13	29	8	0	32	69	87	79
Skills and Tools (Standard A)	2	2	0	0	4	12	9	4	0	16	29	88	33
Human Interaction with Environments (Standard B)	2	0	4	0	6	13	20	4	0	16	40	87	46
Economics (Standards A, B, and D)	3	2	4	0	9	15	23	4	0	24	51	85	60
Personal and Consumer Economics/ Economic Systems (Standards A and B)	2	0	0	0	2	5	16	4	0	16	36	95	38
International Trade and Global Interdependence (Standard D)	1	2	4	0	7	32	7	0	0	8	15	68	22

SOCIAL STUDIES
Number of Points Possible
Grade 11

Standard	Common					Matrix						Total Possible
	MC	SA	CR	Points	Percent	MC	SA	CR	ER	Points	Percent	Points
Content	8	2	0	10	7	95	28	4	0	127	93	137
Application	7	2	12	21	9	32	4	60	128	224	91	245
Civics and Government (Standards A, B, C, and D)	4	2	0	6	6	32	4	16	36	88	94	94
Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation (Standard A)	2	0	0	2	7	10	0	4	12	26	93	28
Purpose, Types, and Fundamental Principles of Government (Standards B and C)	2	0	0	2	5	16	2	8	16	42	95	44
International Relations (Standard D)	0	2	0	2	9	6	2	4	8	20	91	22
History (Standards A, B, and C)	4	0	4	8	6	38	10	24	44	116	94	124
Chronology, Historical Knowledge, Concepts, and Patterns (Standards A and B)	4	0	0	4	5	38	6	12	28	84	95	88
Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation (Standard C)	0	0	4	4	11	0	4	12	16	32	89	36
Geography (Standards A and B)	4	0	4	8	9	32	10	20	24	86	91	94
Skills and Tools (Standard A)	2	0	0	2	7	13	2	12	0	27	93	29
Human Interaction with Environments (Standard B)	2	0	4	6	9	19	8	8	24	59	91	65
Economics (Standards A, B, and D)	3	2	0	5	9	21	8	8	16	53	91	58
Personal and Consumer Economics/ Economic Systems (Standards A and B)	2	0	0	2	5	16	8	4	8	36	95	38
International Trade and Global Interdependence (Standard D)	1	2	0	3	15	5	0	4	8	17	85	20